

Is there life after dental practice ownership?

Dentists often put off selling their practices because they are concerned about life after dentistry.

What will they do with all those extra hours, how will they cope with leaving behind the identity that has defined them for decades? This series of articles explores the very busy lives of some of Practice Sale Search's clients, former practice owners who have embraced post-sale life.

Name: Stephen Snars

Age: 67

Practice Owned: Penrith NSW.

Tell us a little about your career?

I went to a selective high school where we were told to stick to the sciences and were actively discouraged from pursuing the arts.

When it was time to go to university I decided to study dentistry, but I was never comfortable with it. My hands shake when I get adrenalin in my system. If a patient was jittery or scared in the chair, I found it hard to steady myself to do the necessary tasks. In the early days when there were more extractions, I would still be shaking when the next patient came in.

Even though I didn't love it, I had a mortgage, and a family to support and I found some satisfaction from the profession – I had a good rapport with my patients and that made me feel rewarded.

I never moved my practice. From my first job in 1978 right up until last year when I finished practicing I was looking out the same window.

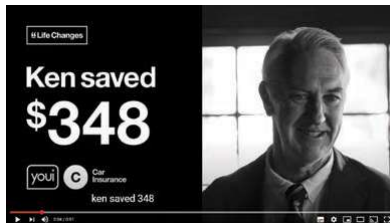
Why did you sell?

I never had an exit plan because I had two associates/partners that I was sharing the facility with and I just couldn't see how I could split up the practice and sell without them. Then it just became the right time:

- ◆ I was approaching 65 years old, and in my mind I always thought that the deal was that you should work until you are 65 and then retire
- ◆ My body was telling me it was time to stop. I had neck and lower back problems in the 6 months before we sold the practice
- ◆ I felt it was time to be able to pursue other interests, like surfing, sailing, guitar playing and acting AND ...
- ◆ My partners in the practice had also become ready to sell.



10 Pound Poms



Advert

When we started taking selling seriously, we went to speak to Simon at Practice Sale Search.

My last day of work was surreal and an immense relief for me. Since then, my blood pressure has dropped, I feel more active, and people tell me I look less stressed.



The Venetian Twins



Norman, On Golden Pond



Shane, Small Poppies

What now: Acting

Now that I have retired from dentistry, I have more time to spend on my acting and theatre passions.

In my 30s I got into acting through my church and I ended up joining a community theatre that would fit in around the dentistry. One day, I saw an ad for extra work in a tv show. It was hard to schedule around patients and not nearly as lucrative as dentistry but I didn't care, I love being part of it.

Since then, I have been in commercials, done bit parts on TV shows and movies like the Underbelly tv show, I did a scene where I got to bump into Richard Roxborough 10 times, I've dressed up as a priest and sat opposite Jack Thompson, while pretending to eat breakfast. I worked on Thor- Love and Thunder ... I don't have any photos because they confiscated our phones.

I have done three jobs this year and sent in a few taped auditions. I am running auditions for a production I am directing this year. I think it's going to be a busy time.

I am sorry I didn't pursue acting sooner, but I feel like I didn't live in circles where acting was considered a valid pursuit.

Any advice?

There seems to be a lot of people who prioritise their career and business above all else. I have always thought that being singular minded about your business was a little sad. Instead, I think you need to be proud if you have more parts to yourself than just your career. ◆